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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [FJ](#)  
SUBJECT: FIJI UPDATE 11/16: STALEMATE CONTINUES

REF: SUVA 497

Classified By: Amb. Dinger. Sec. 1.4 (B,D).

The Commodore's non-negotiable demands

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11. (U) Late on Nov. 15, RFMF Commander Bainimarama provided the media a statement concerning his latest set of demands on PM Qarase's government (reftel). He reportedly said the demands are non-negotiable and must be met before any Bainimarama-Qarase meeting can take place. Bainimarama suggested that, once the Government has complied, all will be well in Fiji and the RFMF will back the Government "150 percent." The demands reportedly are for Qarase and company to: 1) scrap three controversial bills; 2) abolish the Native Land Trust Board's commercial arm, the Vanua Development Corporation; 3) remove all those convicted or implicated in the 2000 coup from government positions; 4) suspend all police investigations against Bainimarama other RFMF leaders; 5) remove Police Commissioner Andrew Hughes from office; and 6) disband the Police Tactical Response (PTR) Unit. Note: In other public remarks, the RFMF has denied that the PTR issue is included in the demands.

The Government's response: don't interfere

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12. (C) Per reftel, PM Qarase says he is ready to talk, but he has also has told the media that he has no intention of giving in to Bainimarama's demands which he sees as unreasonable interference in the democratic process. Home Affairs Minister Vosanibola, Bainimarama's direct supervisor under Fiji's constitutional system, told the press on Nov. 16 that no one, including the RFMF Commander, is above the law. Vosanibola suggested that if former Vice President Seniloli and former PM Rabuka "can front the court, then why can't anybody else?" Vosanibola told the media that he "will ensure that (ongoing police investigations concerning the RFMF) will be maintained."

Bainimarama says no further comment this week

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13. (U) In a media release on Nov. 16, Bainimarama announced that his senior officers have advised him not to make any more public statements until next week, after children have finished school exams. The release says a previously announced Bainimarama media conference for today could have "caused unnecessary fear and anxiety."

GCC hires experts; including a psycho-therapist?

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14. (U) The Great Council of Chiefs continues preparations for a mediation attempt. A GCC spokesman announced that the mediators have hired three experts to assist: a well-known local lawyer, an academic expert on Fijian history and politics, and a psychotherapy consultant, who, on the side,

is known to have opposed the reconciliation (RTUB) bill.

Comment

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15. (C) Bainimarama's demands are supposedly non-negotiable. A number of them are also not possible for the Qarase Government to accept, not while maintaining any credibility at all. In fact, the one about removing all those implicated in 2000 could, in Bainimarama's mind at least, capture Qarase in its grasp. Other's might suggest that same demand could include Bainimarama, himself. The inclusion of a psycho-therapist in the GCC expert advisors is fascinating. Some observers have speculated that Bainimarama suffers from untreated psychological problems dating from the 2000 mutiny that threatened his life. He would not accept that diagnosis.  
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